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--This non-provisional application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application No. 60/112,740 entitled "Multimedia Conferencing Services and Collaboration Services Integrated with Information Services" filed on December 16, 1998 and is a continuation application of application, serial no. 09/370,827. The Applicant of the provisional application, parent and this continuation application is Radhika R. Roy.--

In the Claims:

1. (Once Amended) A method of providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices over a network, comprising:

identifying information services to be provided to at least one of the plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference; and

controlling a media bridge for selectively provisioning the information services to said at least one of the plurality of users;

providing multimedia conference signals to the at least one of the plurality of user devices, wherein the multimedia conference signals include the identified information services;

monitoring the at least one of the plurality of user devices for a change in selection of information services to be provided; and

modifying the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the change in selection of information services.

6. (Once Amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising: determining one of the plurality of user devices to be a speaker of the multimedia conference; and discontinuing information services to any of the at least two of

the plurality of user devices that requests the discontinuance of information services and that is determined to be the speaker.

10. (Once Amended) A communication apparatus for providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices over a network, comprising:

a media bridge for selectively provisioning information services to at least one of the plurality of users;

a memory for storing information services related information; and

a controller in communications with the media bridge and memory, wherein the controller identifies information services to be provided to at least one of the plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference and provides multimedia conference signals to the at least one of the plurality of user devices, and wherein the multimedia conference signals include the identified information services;

means for monitoring the at least one of the plurality of user devices for a change in selection of information services to be provided, said means for monitoring in communications with said controller; and

a means for modifying the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the change in selection of information services.

14. (Once Amended) The communication apparatus of claim 13, wherein the controller receives start up signals from one of the plurality of user devices, and the start-up signals include information for determining whether the information services are to be provided continuously or non-continuously.

--19. (New) A method of providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices over a network, comprising:

receiving a request from at least two of the plurality of user devices requesting different information services;

identifying information services to be provided to the at least two of the plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference;

determining whether the information services of the at least two of the plurality of user devices are to be provided in at least one of a continuous or non-continuous manner;

determining one of the plurality of user devices to be a speaker of the multimedia conference; and discontinuing information services to any of the at least two of the plurality of user devices that requests the discontinuance of information services and that is determined to be the speaker; and

providing multimedia conference signals to at least one of the at least two of the plurality of user devices, wherein the multimedia conference signals include the identified information services in at least one of a continuous and non-continuous manner, said step of providing multimedia conference signals further comprising sending multimedia conference signals that selectively include the requested information services to each of the at least two of the plurality of user devices.

--20. (New) A communication apparatus for providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices over a network, comprising:

a memory; and

a controller in communications with said memory, wherein at least two of the plurality of user devices request different information services, and

the controller identifies information services to be provided to the at least two of the of the plurality of user devices during the multimedia conference,

the controller sends multimedia conference signals that selectively include the requested information services to each of the at least two of the plurality of user devices, and wherein the multimedia conference signals comprise the identified information services,

the controller determines whether the information services of the at least two of the plurality of user devices are to be provided continuously or non-continuously and provides information services in the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the determination, and

the controller receives start up signals from one of the plurality of user devices, and the start-up signals include information for determining whether the information services are to be provided continuously or non-continuously.--

REMARKS

PREFATORY STATEMENT

This Preliminary Amended is direct to the rejected claims 1,3,6,7,9,10, and 14 of the parent application which have also been filed with the present continuation application. Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 10 , dependent claims 6 & 14 and has added claims 19 & 20. Claims 1-20 are now pending and are deemed allowable over the Examiner's objections and rejections over the cited art.

DISCUSSION

Claims 1, 3, 7, and 9 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Ludwig et. al. (US Patent 6,212,547). In particular, the Examiner rejected claim 1 on the basis that the Ludwig reference disclosed

a method of providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices, including identifying information services to be provided to at least one of the plurality of user devices during the conference and providing multimedia conference signals to the at least one of the user devices wherein the signals include the identified information services signals.

The Ludwig reference discloses a multimedia collaboration system that integrates audio, video, and data information in an interoperable manner across various computer systems and networks. More specifically, Ludwig discloses a video and data conferencing system whereby the various forms of conferencing platforms are integrated and made available to the conferencing participants by superimposing graphical images and other data on the conferee's desktop monitors. However, the Ludwig reference fails to disclose the process of selectively controlling a media bridge for the selective provisioning of information services to an end user. Moreover, Ludwig further fails to disclose the steps of monitoring specific users for a change in the selected information services and modifying the conference signals in accordance with the selection changes. Nowhere in Ludwig is there a disclosure or suggestion for the use of a media bridge to interface with the information services sources and selectively allow the provision of specific information services to the end user, to monitor a specific user for a change in information service selection and to modify the information services delivered as a result of the selected changes. Accordingly, claim 1, has been amended to include the steps of 1) controlling a media bridge for selectively provisioning the information services to said at least one of the plurality of users, 2) monitoring the at least one of the plurality of user devices for a change in selection of information services to be provided, and 3) modifying the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the change in selection of

information services. Accordingly, claim 1 and all the dependent claims 2-9 are now deemed allowable over the Examiner's rejection of the claims over Ludwig.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Fernandez et. al. (US Patent No. 6,339,842). In particular, the Examiner commented that Fernandez teaches a communications apparatus for providing a multimedia conference between a plurality of user devices. More specifically, Fernandez teaches that a controller with memory identifies the information services to be provided to at least one user device during the conference and provides multimedia conference signals to that user device.

The Fernandez reference discloses a television system configured for subscriber conference overlay during a television program broadcast. Conference participants are included and rendered viewable as an overlay to the television program. In effect, a picture-in-picture approach to video conferencing is disclosed wherein conference participants are superimposed on a audio/video broadcast program. However, like Ludwig, Fernandez also fails, alone or in combination, to disclose a media bridge for selectively provisioning information services, a means for monitoring a user for a change in selection of information services, and a means for modifying the multimedia conference signals in accordance with the change in selection of information services to be provided.

Accordingly, claim 10 has been amended to include the above referenced deficiencies in Ludwig and Fernandez. Claim 10, and its dependent claims 11-18 are likewise now deemed allowable over the Examiner's objection and rejection over Fernandez.

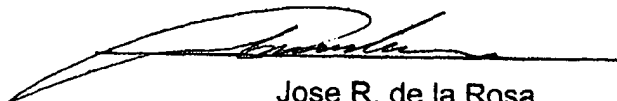
Claims 6 and 14 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, claim 6 has been amended to replace the phrase of "non-continuous information services" with the phrase "discontinuance of the information services". Claim 14, has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the reference to the "startup signals".

Claims 19 & 20 have been rewritten in independent form and contain the limitations of claim 6 & 14 with the added limitations of rewritten claims 4 and 12 of the parent application. These claims 19 & 20 were originally referenced in the Examiner's Office Action to the parent application as allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112 second paragraph. Applicants have made such requested changes and have incorporate all the limitations of the base claims and intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants submit that these claims are likewise now allowable and have overcome any cited art.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-20 are now pending and are considered allowable over the Examiner's objections and patentable over the cited art. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and submit that the Application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

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